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Two Brothers

by anantagonist, translated by akai_koutei

“Tomorrow will be a great day.”

That was the phrase I heard most throughout the past 24 hours, and I couldn't disagree more.

Today would be our first day of school. Weeks ago, Hajime and I had both received our admission letters to Hope's Peak, the country's most prestigious highschool. Everyone seemed excited about it. Everyone except my brother and I.

Although I simply didn't find any particular excitement or surprise about receiving the letter, my twin's unhappiness was due to the sort of letter that had arrived to his name. While the letter addressed to me was the classic and awaited total scholarship admission, his was an admission to the reserve course... no scholarship, no honors. The reserve course

It was finally “the great day” and I was ready to leave, but Hajime hadn't even come downstairs for breakfast and worry was building up inside me. So, I went to his room. Normally we respected each other's space, but were also close enough that he had free access to my room, as did I to his.

I found him still dressing himself, with his shirt still out of his pants and his brow so furrowed it seemed to touch his nose. I closed the door behind me and approached without receiving even a look of recognition that he'd heard me come in.

“Nii-san. Do you need help with that?”

“No! I can tie my own damn tie. I don't need you to treat me like I'm useless.”

I wasn't bothered by his aggressive reply, it was obvious that the anger he directed at me wasn't personal, he was rather still affected by the subject of the school. So I ignored it and set out to help him anyway. I positioned myself between him and the mirror and began to undo the disaster he'd done with his tie. He huffed, looking downward but dropping his hands in a signal of letting me help.

“I told you not to apply to that place. They're not looking for someone like you.”

I had always had trouble measuring my tone, but trusted that Hajime understood me, without rushing to judge me for it. Still, I could feel his body tense up and his anger rise, coloring his neck all the way to his ears as I slid the tie out from under his collar. I continued talking despite his noticeable annoyance, knowing he was leaving me the space to continue uninterrupted.

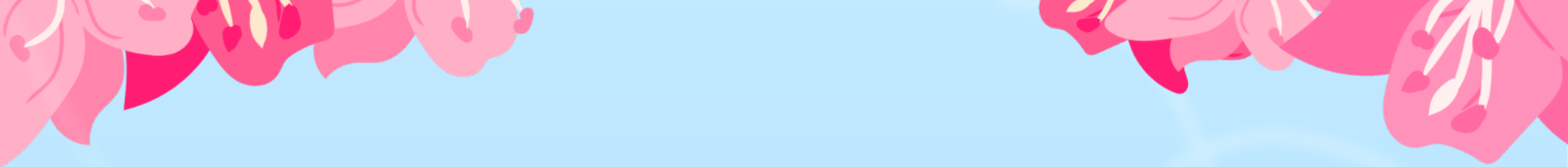
“They look for plain talent. The capacity to accomplish tasks with a computer's precision. People who stand out among others for their excellence in the task they decided to be good at. You don't have that.”

“Wow! Look at you, Ultimate Motivational Speaker.”

“Mother and Father also looked for that...”

“That's why you're their favorite...” I heard the comment come out resentfully through his teeth, like something inside pushed him and he tried to hold it back. It was a reality we were both aware of but rarely mentioned, and one I didn't like in the least.

I spoke more surely, marking my tone to make myself heard over his anger.



“But they’re not right.” When he raised his eyes, I immediately called for his attention. “Hajime. Don’t get distracted, you have to learn to tie your own tie.”

There was no verbal answer, but the way he frowned and tilted his head to watch me again was enough to let me know what he thought. I continued either way, putting the tie on myself and doing its knot slowly, step by step.

“You’re different from all other people, but not in the way you, our parents or Hope’s Peak want you to be. You’re strong physically and emotionally, have a kind heart, ambition, great potential... you can connect with people, understand them in ways I’m unable. You have passion for life, goals to strive for, you get excited and celebrate when you achieve them. I envy that sentiment that comes so easily to you.”

Even with my eyes lowered to watch my own hands at work, I could notice my brother’s gaze being lowered in shame again, I noticed his lips parting but immediately spoke to bar his words before they came out.

“Haji-nii. You’re not paying attention. I’ll do it again.” I undid the tie with quick and precise movements, to repeat the process again.

“You’ve made it very far and walked a longer road than I have. For that, you’re the only person that keeps surprising me,” I continued. “Your growth has been superior by far. Someone who walks 100 kilometers from the starting line is more admirable than someone who only walks 10 from a comfortable advantaged position.”

I finished the knot and looked at Hajime, who still frowned, but no longer avoided my eyes.

I was about to speak again, but this time it was him who

interrupted me, talking with such frustration in his tone that I immediately shut up to let him express himself, though I knew what he was going to say.

“It’s easy for you to say. You always win, you’re always first, you’re always on top. The goal is the goal and all that matters is who crossed it first. Everyone praises you and you’re always the family’s pride. You didn’t even have to take Hope’s Peak exam, you just got your letter, just like that. I spent months studying for those exams and got in the top 5, and still ended up behind you.”

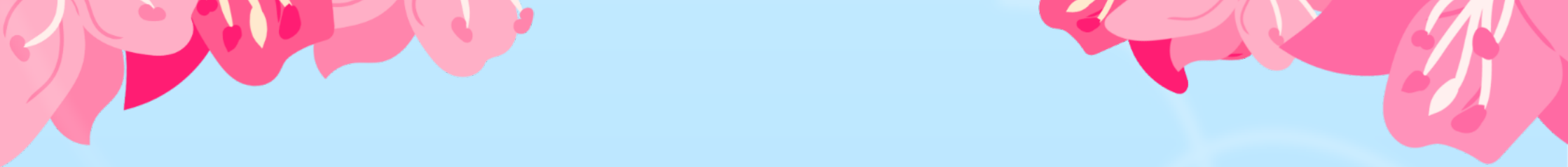
What he said hurt me, though it wasn’t anything new. Hajime had those painful feelings, which I knew were always present in his heart. I could see him clench his hands into fists at each side of his body now, as I had seen him do our whole life, every time his efforts gave him a second place result.

I felt as though I was the only one who noticed, and each victory of mine became empty if the only person I did want to make proud felt this way. Nonetheless, I was glad to know that despite those feelings our relationship was close; there was no one in the world who understood me like him, and I knew there was no one in the world who understood him like I.

Still, it didn’t stop hurting to hear him vocalize his feelings about it.

“It doesn’t matter how much I run, your shadow’s always falling over my head. It doesn’t matter how much I study, train, try, it’s always your name on the trophies and your face at the center of all the pictures, with me always a step behind you. You didn’t even apply to Hope’s Peak and you managed to get in a better spot than mine. I’m nobody.”

I stood on my tip toes, raising my chin to reach and place



a kiss on his furrowed brow, a gesture I hadn't made since we were children, though, just like back then, I hoped it would comfort him in a difficult situation. This wasn't a scraped knee. With age, grievances become more complex, but feel as important and overwhelming as the scraped knee feels to a child.

"You're someone, you're my brother. You are special. I know you want to be so under your standards. But by centering on a very particular objective, you lose perspective of the general layout. You're already special. And you're very special to me."

Hajime raised his eyes and I was able to watch his olive eyes light up in surprise. I smiled while taking the tie off and handing it to him. It wasn't rare for me to smile, but it was for people other than him to see me do it.

"Hajime. If I make any effort to do things, it's because I see how much effort you make, all you accomplish, all you do. You're my inspiration and motivation. I don't care if the world believes you're not special, to me you're the most special person in existence, because you're the only one that makes me feel excitement and find joy in living."

As I spoke, I watched him put on the tie, following the same movements I'd made with care and exactitude. It either had only been his anger that made his hands clumsy before, or he truly had never learned to tie his own tie, in which case I was all the more impressed at his quick learning.

Once I saw him finish, I nodded in approval of his work.

"Let's go to class."

I quickly adjusted his collar, centering the perfect knot of his tie, and made my way to the door to leave him any amount of time he needed to finish preparing. I stopped, Hajime had cleared his throat in a clear attempt to get my attention. So I turned back and saw him with his body also turned to me, but his gaze slightly away.

"Thanks, Izuru..."

I nodded again and left to wait for him downstairs.

We made our way towards the great red brick building together. Now I could indeed see the smile and pride in my brother's face, as he crossed the gates into the Hope's Peak campus.



The Remnant

by magi

He had already predicted everything that would happen. But regardless of what happened, it would be of no concern to him because he would no longer be present. Regardless of the future, Izuru Kamukura's existence would come to an end.

There was no reason to meet any of the remnants once again. Or so he thought.

It turned out that even one so beloved by talent was not omniscient.



While he was no longer present in a tangible sense, he still existed as a specter. A transient observer to Hajime Hinata's life from then on. Watching the once normal boy make use of his talents here and there, and toss back and forth every night, plagued by scattered memories. Every so often, Hajime would wake with a strangled gasp, his chest heaving, his shoulders trembling, and his face wet with tears. With twitching fingers, Hajime would reach up to comb his fingers through his hair. He'd flinch whenever his fingers brushed against the ruined scar tissue atop his head like a twisted crown.

Izuru Kamukura would observe. Night after night. Watch Hajime Hajime muster up an air of normalcy and force himself to lie back down and attempt restful sleep once more.

"You are hopelessly dull, Hajime Hinata," Izuru said. "You have people you can confide in. Suffering alone does not suit someone as plain as you."

Of course, Hajime Hinata hadn't responded. How boring.



Simply watching became intolerable, so Izuru Kamukura began to test the extent of his capabilities as a specter. He found that while Hajime Hinata responded to brushes of contact with a shiver, inanimate objects were more complicated. He could flip the pages of a book, but he couldn't pick up or carry the book itself. He could only move small, relatively light objects such as chopsticks and empty glasses.

Hajime Hinata always jumped when Izuru swept aside his eating utensils. He was especially startled when Izuru knocked over his glass. Hajime's gaze jerked towards Izuru's direction, except it wasn't quite lined up.

Izuru flicked his forehead. Hajime stiffened, but it wasn't long before his shoulders slacked.

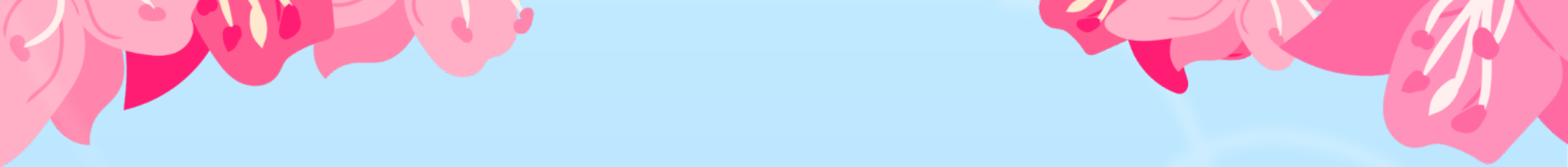
"Must be going crazy," Hajime muttered to himself.

"As if you weren't already?" Izuru asked him and, predictably, didn't receive a response.



On one hand, making Hajime Hinata worry he might be haunted was rather pointless. On the other, Izuru did feel a twinge of satisfaction when Hajime flinched in front of the mirror. More so when Izuru knocked away his toothbrush and Hajime was left looking rather helpless.

Izuru was acting out. He's quite aware of this. These acts of defiance and rebellion made for poor justifications of his existence.



Well, he hadn't exactly wanted to keep living upon entering the simulation. In a way, this was karmic punishment for threatening to throw away not only the lives of the remnants but the remains of Class 78.

"It's your fault as well," he told Hajime. "You were the one who agreed to the project in the first place."

Hajime continued to comb through his hair furiously. He can't seem to get the antenna quite right. His grimace was darkening.

He yelped when Izuru pulled on his cheeks.

"S-Seriously what the hell?!"

"Hell is right," Izuru hummed. "This existence is hellish. However, you know the saying, don't you?" As there is no point in waiting for an answer, he simply prodded the once normal boy and watched dully as Hajime turned away. "Misery loves company."



Of course, Izuru Kamukura could not be satisfied with stagnancy and solitude. It had only taken X amount of days before the vacancy of living day to day as a mere tool and accessory for the Hope's Peak Steering Committee had driven him to take the first hand offered. It hadn't mattered the wretch that hand was attached to.

Hajime Hinata could not fully retreat into himself either. Or, rather, he would not be allowed to.

"Hinata-kun! It's been a while!"

'z. The former Ultimate Luck of the 77th batch of Hope's Peak Academy. Recently recovered from once malignant lymphoma. The second 'owner' of a certain wretch's hand has since been replaced with a bionic one, which Nagito Komaeda was using to wave at hi—them.

Nagito's gaze flickered towards Izuru Kamukura. His smile widened. He waved again at both of them.

"Aren't you going to let me in?" Nagito asked in a purring lilt as if Hajime had the heart to slam the door in his face. "It's rude to just make someone stand on your porch."

The sky was overcast, but Nagito Komaeda is more threatening than any storm. Hajime Hinata might manage a smile, but Izuru Kamukura was now alert.

Because. Nagito Komaeda could see him.

"Come inside," Hajime said, standing aside.

Izuru huffed. Nagito smirked in his direction, which was wholly different to the snide glee of one Junko Enoshima but was unpleasant all the same.



"How lucky it is that I've gotten the chance to see you!" Nagito exclaimed, gushed really.

"I mean, all you have to do is call," Hajime said. "I'm always willing to meet up."

Nagito's smile didn't twitch, yet Izuru saw through him easily.



An irritant as always.

“I don’t know,” Nagito went on with a patronizing attempt at innocence. “Lately, it seems you’ve been keeping to yourself.”

“Has it?” Hajime grimaced. “That’s... I just...”

“No man is an island, you know. I worry the isolation might drive you mad.”

Hajime flinched at that. But even under Izuru’s darkening glare, Nagito was a careless beam of light. So irritatingly bright, especially with an avid gaze that was as sharp as it was often intense.

Nagito was similar to Hajime in some unfortunate ways. Their dedication to talent for starters. When compared to Izuru however, Nagito was his complete opposite.

Nosy, pushy, and passionate in his pursuits—Nagito was...completely different.

“I guess I do...get lonely,” Hajime muttered deferentially. “There’s just so much going on my head.”

Nagito looked at Izuru.

“Stating it out loud might be a good start,” Nagito said. “Simply not acknowledging it will not cause those problems to disappear. The opposite, really. You’re causing it to fester.”

“Is that really what you think I am?” Izuru huffed. “A mere problem to solve? A loose end to tidy up?”

“I think,” Nagito said, “That ignoring Kamukura-kun isn’t doing you any good.” He paused just a moment, looking at

him. “You’re behaving rather childishly.”

Hajime was quiet. Nagito smiled.

“You don’t need to make such a dour face,” he laughed then, waving his bionic hand. The mechanical whirl was only slightly less grating than the wheeziness of his giggling. “It’s just a comment.”

Because of his transience, Izuru could not see whatever face he was making reflected in Nagito’s twinkling gaze. All he knew is that he felt agitated. It was as if his very being was bubbling.

“You’re such a jackass,” Hajime remarked quietly.

“Ill-bred, even now,” Izuru agreed just as quietly. “It is as if getting on the nerves is your talent, Nagito Nagito.”

Hajime tensed beside him. Nagito looked rather despicably pleased with himself.

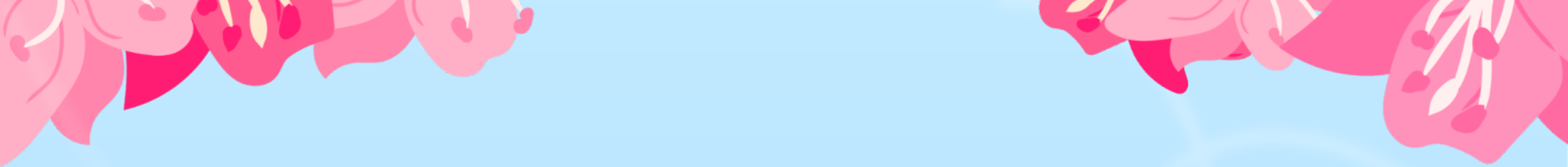
“It’s just a comment,” Nagito repeated stubbornly. “Rather than insult me, we can all talk things out like adults, yes?”

They both wanted to throw him out. It was easier, after all, to just be childish. To simply lash out at annoyances and pretend that menial rebelliousness was enough.

Some time ago, on a boat en route to a certain island, Izuru had met this annoying person he quickly dismissed.

“There is no reason we’ll ever meet again,” he had said.

There hadn’t been any reason for Izuru to think he’d still exist after. And perhaps for that reason, Nagito could not be deterred now.



“Hinata-kun. Kamukura-kun.” Stubborn until the end of time, Nagito kept smiling at them. “Let’s talk things over.”

“This is your fault,” Izuru told Hajime sourly. “You were the one who let him in.”

Hajime...flinched. Then, Hajime let out a long, heavy sigh. Izuru, too, couldn’t help but sigh.

It was a little like submitting to fate itself.

“What do you even want me to say?” Hajime asked.

“I do not want to even have this conversation,” Izuru muttered.

Nagito laughed again.

“I think it’s lucky that we’re all here,” he said. “There’s no reason not to take advantage of this opportunity, right?”

Even one beloved by talent can be unlucky.

That was the thought Izuru Izuru had. But now that it came to this, he could only look forward.

Because he was here, he would have to move forward.

“I suppose I should begin,” Izuru said.

Hajime gave him a wide-eyed look as if seeing him for the very first time.

It was, admittedly, not only comical but another push forward for someone who had thought his existence would be voided. Perhaps, then, there could be other forms of amusement down the line.

Either way...

“I had thought I wouldn’t be present anymore,” Izuru said. “And yet, here I remain.”

This will be the first step.



No Sunlight

by sailor_glock

In a certain room of an unnamed, yet quite distinguished school, a cast of eccentric characters spent their after class hours.

Be they mere loafers, or a group of misguided and unlikely philanthropists had yet to be decided.

However, Izuru willed themself to slip through the cracks, as they stared listlessly at the floor; or more accurately, at the mangled surveillance camera.

Now, seeing how thick the tripod it had been supported on had been, one would imagine it'd be rather sturdy. That would be a mistake- a reasonable assumption, but a mistake nonetheless- and it could not be stressed enough, one anyone could make.

Given their gaffe, one might expect ridicule or anger. They were shown neither. In fact, their mind stumbled to a halt as they attempted to parse the situation at hand.

Not that they'd be aware then and there, but this slip up would alter the course of their school career ad infinitum.



One moment they'd been exploring their new surroundings and the next, the unnamed event, then the classroom's previously unnoticed occupants were upon them. Swarming like flies on an overripe fruit.

"Yo! I don't think I've seen you around." A blonde calls out from a corner of the room, sledge hammer in hand, as she

demolishes the sheet vinyl tiling with vigor, unbecoming the work.

She's dressed in an artfully chaotic black and white overall jumpsuit, her uniform tie ran through the belt loops. The top half of her jumpsuit dangles uselessly at her waist, her top instead consisting of a red t-shirt.

A garish orange handkerchief hangs from her neck like an actor in an old western film.

Laced-up heel boots complete her look, they're rather out of place for the task she'd set out to do. They suspect they're a signature staple to her sense of fashion.

A few feet away, a young man sits reclined in a fold out chair. Legs crossed at the knee and bobbing up and down in place slightly as he continued to shift around.

His face was obscured by a manga of which Izuru could not make out the title. He clearly wished to remain uninvolved. Izuru envied him deeply.

Izuru opts to ignore the blonde, turning their attention to the girl with short black hair just in front of them.

"We're the *****'s **** Academy Gardening Club," Mukuro informs them. By the smudge of dirt on her cheek they're nearly inclined to believe her.

She too sports an orange bandana, knotted wrapped around one of her biceps. It stands out against the brown color of her uniform.

They cast a quick glance around the room, a single brow lifting to indicate their disbelief. Even with all evidence stacked against her claim, it makes less sense not to take her



word on things.

“And I’ll be leaving, if you’ll excuse me-” they kick the camera debris far away from them, intentionally ignoring the additional mess and deafening clatter; as even the blonde from before had ceased her labor.

The door slams open behind them, ushering in a flurry of movement and the telltale warnings of a future migraine.

“This way, you’ll need to stay until Enoshima-san finishes her part of the renovations.”

A blonde girl of both immaculate hair and uniform glides in, seeming to not notice anything except the task at hand.

“Yes, Sonia-san.” A pink haired teen agrees, lugging a large trolley behind him. He looks almost elated at the prospect of work before his eyes settle on the remains of the cameras that they’d destroyed.

He stalls midstep, soundlessly sputtering- face twisting in exaggerated anguish.

“I’ve brought Souda-san with me to help install the sprinkler system, just as promised!”

The blonde swivels to look at them, an honest smile of delight gracing her noble face.

“Oh! Hello, welcome to the ****’s **** Gardening Club. My name is Sonia Nevermind,” she gestures to the pink haired teen currently working his way through the bargaining stage of his grief, “and this is Kazuichi Souda.”

“Are any of your talent’s related to gardening?” they ask, wishing they hadn’t wasted their time when they take stock of

the resounding blank stares.

Izuru sweeps some of their long hair over their shoulder and out of the way, focusing on the feel of thick hair pooling down the small of their back and falling mere inches above the floor.

Sonia is the first and only to answer.

“Well, no. But that doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of events. Not everything is about talent at our school... or more accurately not everything should be about talent. Our club is here to spread that message.”

“Message?”

“That in the real world, talent is useless if you cannot live your life to the fullest. Why does a housewife make homemade meals if they are not a culinary expert? Why do hobbyists exist? For the enjoyment of it!” Her blonde eyes sharpen as her words take on a more authoritative tone.

“...”

Somewhere deep inside they deeply resent her words.

She bulldozes right through the tense silence.

“Much like hope, talent cannot exist without the untalented. Enjoyment for the sake of enjoyment! Life without decadence is merely survival!”

She continues her impromptu speech with a sense of self assuredness previously thought to not exist. They’re certain she fully believes what she’s prattling on about, but it’s more than a little difficult to focus on the message.



Not that it wasn't interesting (it truthfully wasn't), but because Junko was mimicking Sonia in a rather unflattering manner.

Was anyone planning to say anything? Was there actually something to be done about it? Or maybe this was just normal for them...

They fully turn away from her to peer outside to an outside club activity... that suspiciously looks like gardening. Or, more accurately, a group of several students mourning a desecrated plot of land.

Smashed tomatoes, cages and garden stakes broken to jagged splinters, a giant paint splatter in the shape of a smiley face, and randomly dug up holes.

"The Gardening Club... needed security cameras on tripods to record what exactly?"

"Who said anything about recording?" Kazuichi mumbles, "These cameras are exclusively intended for broadcasting. Or, they were. Before you got a hold of them..." He pauses, expecting an introduction.

Fine.

They weren't going to apologize for their actions. They also wouldn't excuse it.

"I'm called Izuru Kamukura."

"The name's Kazuichi! I'd say pleased to meet you, but I'm still a little miffed at what you did to my baby."

So he was one of those types.

Junko picks up on the shift in their mood immediately, zeroing in on the confusion and disgust.

"Yes, yes Kamukura-kun... You'll give us so much to work with, riiight~?" Junko leans against the post hole digger, stars shining in her unnatural baby blue eyes.

"She may be my junior, but she is quite cute- is she not?" Sonia smiles brightly, hands clasped together. She isn't asking a question.

Their orbicularis oris muscle twitches, a reaction which is greatly unfamiliar to them.

Kazuichi turns a doleful eye to them, tears forming at the corner of his eyes.

By convention they owe him for the destruction of his cameras and wasting his time, but deep down Izuru didn't think they could justify staying here for that alone.

They hadn't expected anything to be here in the first place, their search for a cure to their boredom had only thus far punished them.

Maybe this year won't be boring after all... But that was also a problem, wasn't it?

"...Will we grow lilies?"

"Yes, I think we can manage that." Mukuro assures them, the smallest flicker of emotion in her slate blue eyes.

"Alrighty! A new project's lined up~!" Junko calls out, chucking her sledgehammer to the side without a care in the world.



Sonia gasps, hands clasped to her chest as she spins around in place.

“We’ll grow white lilies and paint them pink! It’ll be so lovely!”

“Pink?” Kazuichi interjects, tugging one of his braids thoughtfully, “I gotta admit, I’m a fan! But, shouldn’t Izuru get the say at the end? What if they want to paint the lilies red or somethin’?” He shot them a wink and a thumbs up.

Not helpful.

“Pink? Of course we won’t do pink! That’s a little presumptuous, don’t you think?”

“You’re right, I’m so sorry!” Sonia cries, as her voice takes on a more determined tone. “In the ****’s **** Gardening Club we have no need for prosperity! The only abundance we see fit to observe is a state of opulence!”

Junko dances over to her, quick as sin. Gone were the creeping motions of before.

She stood with the other girl, clasping their hands together.

“You, like... totally get me.”

There’s no easily discernible emotion to be seen from Junko. Her unnatural blue eyes wide and laser focused onto Sonia. The sound of a pin drop would be thunderous amidst the silence.

And then just as quickly as the world around them had seemingly screeched to a halt, it sped up again without care or concern for its inhabitants.

“So that means we’ll just have to paint them orange! Maybe a few can be red like Kazuichi said, what a great idea!” Junko’s grinning as she spins Sonia around like a prima ballerina and entertains a flustered Kazuichi. They can’t help but shudder at the sudden temperature drop.

“We have our entire school careers to make the most of things... Maybe one day we’ll have pink lilies,” Mukuro offers, as dispassionate as it may be, to Izuru specifically.

“Boring! Leave all the fun ideas to me or all the effort getting into this school will be for nothing.” Junko lifts a hand to her mouth to giggle in an uncharacteristically posh gesture. “Besides, who needs pink when we can paint the town rainbow?”

Mukuro turns away from the others, shoulders slumping in defeat.

“Lighten up a bit! This is a club everyone in our year’s dying to get into!” Kazuichi assures them, impressingly unperturbed by their silent glare. “Hell, I’m not even actually a member, I just help out when I can.”

“Not a member, yet!” Sonia hums, smiling so sweetly.

“R-really?” Kazuichi flushes to the tips of his ears.

“Earlier Enoshima-san told me to tell you to-” Junko is quick to continue for her, twirling a lock of wavy strawberry blonde locks.

“I said to go fu-”

“To go find a greater resolve! Until then you’ll have to settle for being our handyman! What an honor.”



“She said that? Junko did?”

“I didn’t.”

“Of course she did, I wouldn’t lie to you about something so serious!” Sonia rests a dainty hand on the boy’s shoulder, head tilting in the very definition of serenity.

“I really didn’t.”

“Wow, she sure knows how to charm a person. She always has the words everyone needs to hear, even if they don’t wanna!”

“Am I being ignored right now?” She appears to wilt in place, all previous shows of confidence nowhere to be seen.

“That’s why she’s the club’s president! Now go, handyman-san! Construct a dazzling sprinkler system!”

“I’m totally being ignored. This sucks. Why am I even bothering with these two when they’re content to happily feed off of each other and the idea of me? I could grow mushrooms in the corner again... Maybe I will.”

Izuru isn’t sure they can handle much more of this.

“I don’t see the point in any of this.”

Sonia chuckles, lips curling into a roguish smirk. Her hand reaches out for their shoulder but they dodge, hissing out a quick “don’t touch me”. Unbothered, she redirects herself to hanging off a compromised Junko’s shoulder.

She flicks the hair that falls into her face aside with a careless wrist.

“Kukuku... Kamukura-san, clearly you don’t understand the epic highs and lows of after-school club activities.”

“Now I’m just a prop? I better act if I want things to change, then.”

Why act now instead of earlier, is it for some kind of masochistic thrill? They shoot her an especially unimpressed slow blink.

In the background, Mukuro resumes Junko’s previous task with a single-minded determination that manages to unnerve even them. Her face is bright red. It’s most likely not from the exertion, given the definition of her biceps.

“I don’t have the money to pay for the damages from earlier. My apologies. Now, as I said earlier, I’ll be taking my leave.”

“Ah, ah, ah! Hold it right there, Reserve Course! You’re stuck here until everyone returns to their dorms. We all know you weren’t supposed to be here in the first place.”


Junko walks over to the damaged equipment, crouching in front of it.

“You’ll learn the cost of curiosity in ****’s ****’s hallowed hall and not only that, you’ll learn to love it here... with us.”

Fine, I’ll bite, they think. They’d already made it this far today.

“What makes you say that?”

“Because you have nothing. Nothing to lose, nothing to obtain. Nothing at all.”



She rises to her feet and saunters over to them, removing something from one of her pockets. She walks over to them and keeps going, invading their personal space so she can get close enough to whisper in their ear.

“It isn’t fate, but you stumbling across our club room and destroying the cameras was no happy coincidence either.”

“...”

“Be good, why don’t you?” Junko croons, tucking her mystery item in the lapel of their black suit.

They didn’t have to look to know what it was.

“You’ve been marked. Why not act like it?”

Looking around the room at everyone’s unabashed earnestness only cemented the creeping feeling they’d had from the start: that at the end of the day, none of this was worth fighting against.

They huff out an inaudible sigh and walk over to sit on the floor next to Yasuke.

For the first time that afternoon, he looked up from his manga.

“You get used to it.” he says, brows ever so slightly furrowed in a show of weariness or perhaps pity.

Izuru tucked a knee up to their chest, deciding their time was better spent observing the Gardening Club’s antics than answering Yasuke.